

The Energy Bus Summary

By Jon Gordon

Out of 10, how would you rate your current life score? For some, it may be pretty high, and for others, it may be pretty low. However, whatever score you gave yourself, at some point, we're all bound to go into an energy slump.

The Energy Bus is a short and simple fable that teaches us how to maximize our energy through positivity. By using a fictional character called George, we're given ten lessons about harnessing our energy to live more purposeful, joyful, and passionate lives.

Jon Gordon is an American author, motivational speaker, and expert on leadership, sales, and teamwork. *The Energy Bus* is the *Wall Street Journal* bestseller that looks at everyday challenges and how to overcome them.

We'll briefly go through the ten simple rules that promise to take you on the ride of your life. So fasten your seatbelt and come on board the energy bus.

Meet George

In this simple allegory, the everyman character is portrayed by George.

George works in middle management at a lightbulb factory. He lives a great suburban life thanks to his solid salary. He has a great house, can afford new cars, and is able to provide for his family. However, George

isn't happy.

For a growing period of time, George has found himself increasingly unhappy, to the point where both his boss and wife give him ultimatums. If he doesn't change his attitude, he's going to lose his job and his wife.

It's at this point that things get really chaotic at work, and things escalate when his car breaks down, and he's forced to take the bus to work. George clambers aboard the #11 bus, and Joy, the enthusiastic driver greets him. George's thunderous mood is no match for Joy, and she tells him that it's her job to "energize passengers." Joy is an "energy ambassador" who promotes positive thinking, and shares ten rules for having "the ride of your life."

At the heart of *The Energy Bus* is living life positively and purposefully. It's not about superficial motives or faking enthusiasm and being disingenuous. The idea is to embrace positivity, weed out energy-sapping individuals, or so-called "energy vampires," and cultivate a life filled with energy and hope for the future. Let's take a look at the simple lessons.

Day One

On the first day, George learns an important lesson, which is that he's the driver. We're all in charge of our own destiny, and we can't blame anyone for the direction our lives take. Taking responsibility for our lives and our actions is where a lot of us go wrong. We need to embrace both our successes and failures.

How much of your life is determined by other people?

If you're living by what other people are telling you to do, or acting in a way that doesn't feel authentic, you have the power to change. All of us have the freedom to choose, and we need to decide to be the drivers of our own bus. By the end of day one, George learns that having the freedom and ability to choose is our greatest gift, and when we start to take agency for our lives, everything changes.

As the driver of our own bus, we also get to choose to hang around low or high energy people, whether to eat foods that provide us with energy or those that don't. Each decision we make affects us and the people around us, so giving a simple smile or acknowledging another person has a significant impact.

Day Two

On the second day, Joy asks George to focus on his journey. It's one thing realizing that you're in the driver's seat, but you have to know where you're driving to.

Where do you want to go and what do you want to see? What world do you want to create for yourself and for those around you?

Grappling with our vision for the future may seem daunting. Try to begin by focusing on your vision for yourself, then expand this to what you want in terms of your career and work colleagues, and then how you want your relationships to be.

Often we jump into action and start realizing our vision when we're jolted by something or someone. Maybe we look in the mirror and don't like what we see, perhaps someone tells us a brutal truth about ourselves, or maybe we find ourselves dealing with a crisis. In any event, we all need to focus our attention on our goals so that we know what path we're on.

Those who've read *The Secret* will know about the law of attraction. The law of attraction states that with enough focus and determination, we can invite something into our lives. The argument is that by using visualizing techniques, we can invite positivity into our lives. What's more, if we focus our energy on material things, or wellbeing, or opportunities, the idea is that we will reap the benefits.

Day Three

How do you stay positive when everything around you seems to be collapsing?

On day three, Joy argues that you need to adjust your mindset to change your current circumstances. She provides a handy formula for change, which is $E+P=O$.

Let's break this down. E stands for events, and P stands for perception. The O stands for outcome. So the idea is that we can't control events, but we can change our perception. So when faced with an event, perceive it in a positive way, and you'll change the outcome.

For example, if you're invited to your exes party, you may perceive this as a nightmare situation. However, if you reframe this as an opportunity to

meet new people and have a good time, you're more likely to have fun and change the outcome. Likewise, if you see an early morning work meeting scheduled for Monday, you can think of it as an opportunity to share a new idea that might impact the entire workweek. Hence instead of dreading the meeting, you may even look forward to it.

Days Four, Five, and Six

The lesson learned on day four is the importance of encouraging other people to get on the bus.

A team has to be in sync, and therefore it's essential to generate "buy-in" with all team members. The first thing you need to do is be forthcoming with your team members, and share your vision and goals. Once you've done this, they can decide whether or not they want to get on the bus. Knowing what we're signing up for is absolutely essential, and it also helps to develop trust.

Day five can be difficult because this is when you realize who is joining you on the bus, who isn't getting on the bus, and who you need to kick off the bus.

Did you know that according to the 2013 Gallup survey, 70% of Americans hate their jobs, or are disengaged at work? Now imagine you're one of the 30% who likes your job? What do you think the impact of so much negativity would have on your performance? And while this isn't to say that every company has a ratio of 70% of employees who exhibit negativity, given these statistics, most workplaces likely experience the side effects of the "energy vampire."

Negativity costs money in the workplace, and negative employees sap the energy from everyone around them. On day six, George learned that it's crucial to eliminate people who are sabotaging a team's success. Furthermore, it's essential to value the people who get on your bus. Some people may show reluctance to climb on board, because of your past behavior or lack of acknowledgment of them. Therefore, make sure that you open up clear lines of communication where everyone has the opportunity to express how they feel, and what issues they may have.

Days Seven and Eight

On days seven and eight, George gains insight into leadership.

First, he is shown that being a good leader is about leading from the heart. Joy advises him that it's not enough just to be a CEO; you have to be a "chief energy officer."

Energy in the workplace is paramount to a company's success. Furthermore, having an energized workplace means that people aren't afraid to learn and to fail. Positive energy fuels opportunities, and opportunities are the precursor to growth.

If you were given the opportunity to be part of a groundbreaking team, would you volunteer? Most of us want to be part of extraordinary teams, and many of us would take on even the smallest of tasks just to say we were a part of it. The bottom line is that people want to be part of exciting and energized teams.

To create an energetic team, we need to lead with excitement.

Excitement is contagious, and it spreads when more and more people become inspired. Being excited shouldn't be false and disingenuous though, it should come from a space of commitment and vision.

However, as George learns on day eight, it's not enough just to be positive and enthusiastic. Good leaders lead with love and have the best interests of the team at heart. Leading with love means that you value your team, and everyone feels loved and appreciated. Everyone should feel seen and heard.

Work cultures with high levels of morale have people working together who feel cared for, and they feel as if their future is secure. Furthermore, they do their best because they feel as if their strengths are recognized. Importantly, it's not just about acknowledging the strengths of individuals, but using these strengths and trusting individuals to do what they're good at.

Finally, make time to get to know the people around you and listen to what they have to say. Empathy is one of the most critical skills shown by a leader, and this comes through listening. Leaders should also acknowledge and recognize milestones and achievements and provide opportunities to bring out the best in people. A good leader is also someone who serves employees and leads from the front.

Day Nine

What's your larger purpose?

We need to focus a lot more on what legacy we want to leave behind, and therefore we should think about everyone around us. We need to

explore ideas around our own skills and ask ourselves what we can teach others?

Our larger purpose also becomes a team's purpose. Therefore, leaders foster teamwork and value, where even the most minor role is recognized as pivotal. Simon Sinek asserts that every good leader starts with "why," because this encourages people to buy-in to the project or business. As Gordon says, ' Purpose infuses your everyday life with passion.'

Day Ten

On day ten, George is greeted by other commuters chanting, 'Too blessed to be stressed!'

Life is stressful and challenging, but, and this is a big but, it's also filled with extraordinary beauty, joy, and hope. We only get one ride on the bus, so we need to enjoy it and take nothing for granted.

Start by banishing all of those small worries and anxieties that arise from being inconvenienced. When you look back on your life, the trivialities won't matter. As our author says, 'After you die, your inbox will keep receiving emails.'

In a research study, 95-year-olds were asked what they wished they had done more of throughout their long lives. Unsurprisingly none of them wanted to eat more rice cakes. But seriously, the top responses were about living in the moment, being more mindful, reflecting more, taking more risks, and leaving a legacy.

So remember, we leave behind our stories and our positive energy.

The New George

By taking heed of the ten rules, George managed to turn his life around.

No matter who we are, we can all learn lessons from George. One of the most profound messages is to "feed the positive dog." There are two dogs inside each of us; there's the aggressive, hostile dog, and the gentle, positive dog. The dog that's most dominant is the one we feed. So if we feed positivity, positivity will dominate and win.

We can feed our positive dogs by being optimistic and expressing gratitude. A great way of recognizing gratitude, is by writing down what we're grateful for every evening before bed. Channeling these positive thoughts keeps us focused on what's important.

Another positive action is to forge connections with other people, whether family members, colleagues, team members, or classmates. Invite people onto the bus and share what you expect from them. Encourage these people to communicate, and remember that not everyone will want to get on the energy bus. This is okay, but you have to identify these people so that they don't sap your energy. "Energy vampires" need to be identified so that we can move away from them. If you have energy vampires in your team, they need to adjust their attitude, or they need to leave.

In Conclusion

The energy bus isn't just about ourselves; it's also about other people. Once you have people on your energy bus, you need to acknowledge them and appreciate them. It's human nature to want recognition, so make sure that you praise good work and positive energy.

We also need to understand that our purpose is often greater than what we initially set out to do. So be malleable and open to change, because circumstances constantly change, and new opportunities can crop up at any time. Being adaptable and resilient means that we can embrace opportunities and make the most of every situation.

By the end of the book, the change within George is so significant that he completely alters his perspective and worldview. His wife and family bask in his cheerful glow, and his marriage and home-life flourish.

What's more, after George nails his work presentation, he tells his team that they can all go home early. But here's the thing, none of them want to leave; they all want to stay and celebrate.

Living with joy isn't just a single story; it's a story that becomes collective, because joy is energy that spreads and manifests in the most profound ways.